

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 NASA-01
OES-06 ISO-00 /084 W
-----011048Z 000551 /20

R 311000Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7207
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
USMISSION USUN NY
CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 0674

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, SS, MR, MI
SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN/MOROCCAN MILITARY EXCHANGES, CHANGE OF
GIRM MILITARY LIAISON OFFICER IN RABAT AND CONTINUING GIRM
ARMS PROCUREMENT EFFORTS

REF: (A) USDAO RABAT 281530Z MAR 77(IR 6 865 0058 77), (B)
USDAO RABAT 300855Z MAR 77(IR 6 865 0061 77)

1. COMMANDANT MOHAMMED THIAM, DIRECTOR OF MILITARY SECTION
IN OFFICE OF OSURITANIAN PRESIDENT, DEPARTED FOR RABAT ON
MARCH 29 TO REPLACE COLONEL AHMED MAHMUD OULD HUSSEIN AS
CHIEF MILITARY LIAISON OFFICER WITH MOROCCAN GENERAL STAFF.
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THIAM TOLD AMBASSADOR MARCH 28 (A) HE WAS GOING TO RABAT TO
PERMIT COL. HUSSEIN WHO IS SIMULTANEOUSLY INSPECTOR GENERAL
OF GIRM ARMED FORCES TO RETURN TO MAURITANIA TO CARRY OUT MUCH-
NEEDED INSPECTION OF ARMED FORCES EQUIPMENT, (B) ASSIGN-
MENT WAS TEMPORARY AND (C) HE HAD BEEN CHOSEN SINCE HIS
JOB IN PRESIDENCY WAS ALREADY OUTSIDE SPARSELY STAFFED
COMMAND STRUCTURE AND HIS RELOCATION WOULD NOT SET OFF

PROGRESSIVE SERIES OF COMMAND SHIFTS.

2. THIAM/HUSSEIN SHIFT AND INSPECTION WHICH
HUSSEIN IS SLATED TO DIRECT MAY BE CONNECTED TO RECENT
VISIT OF MOROCCAN MILITARY DELEGATION TO NOUAKCHOTT
(REFTEL A), AND TO GIRM MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL
SOVEREIGNTY SALAH'S AUDIENCE WITH KING HASSAN IN
MARRAKESH ON MRACH 28. WE CONCUR WITH REFTEL B ASSESS-
MENT THAT MARRAKESH VISIT ALMOST CERTAINLY WAS TO CON-
TINUE DISCUSSIONS ON MILITARY SITUATION, PARTICULARLY
IN LIGHT OF FACT GIRM MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND ARMY
CHIEF OF STAFF, LTC AHMED OULD BOUCIEF, ACCOMPANIED
SALAH. IN ADDITION TO THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT MOROCCO
REPORTEDLY AGREED TO PROVIDE MAURITANIA PER REFTEL B,
WE SUSPECT MAURITANIANS ALSO RAISED ISSUE OF SAUDI PAY-
MENT FOR AIRCRAFT AS PART OF CONTINUING GIRM ATTEMPT TO
BEEF UP ITS AIR CAPABILITIES. FOR PAST YEAR MAURITANIANS
HAVE UTILIZED SMALL CESSNA AND DEFENDER AIRCRAFT EXTEN-
SIVELY AND EFFECTIVELY FOR AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE AND
RETALIATION STRIKES. GIRM MILITARY IS SEEMINGLY CON-
VINCED THAT ROCKETS FIRED FROM THESE AIRCRAFT ARE MORE
EFFECTIVE IN DESERT GUERRILLA WARFARE THAN HEAVY
ARMAMENT OF HIGH-SPEED JET FIGHTERS. IT MAY ALSO BE
SIGNIFICANT THAT MOROCCAN MILITARY VISIT COINCIDED WITH
THAT OF LOCKHEED REPRESENTATIVE WHO WAS TRYING TO SELL
C-130 AIRCRAFT TO MAURITANIANS. LOCAL MAURITANIAN BUSI-
NESSMAN WHO SERVED AS LOCKHEED INTERMEDIARY WITH GIRM
AIR FORCE REPORTS THAT HE, THROUGH GIRM AMBASSADOR TO
BRUSSELS, HAS ALREADY BEGUN EFFORTS TO INTEREST SAUDIS
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IN BANKROLLING GIRM PURCHASE OF TWO C-130S.

3. OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS LOCAL FRENCH AND SPANISH
MILITARY ATTACHES HAVE PAINTED INCREASINGLY DISMAL POR-
TRAITS OF GIRM LOGISTICAL CAPABILITIES. MAINTENANCE OF
VARIOUS TYPES OF MILITARY VEHICLES HAS BEEN MOST SERIOUS
DIFFICULTY, AND IT HAS BECOME COMMONPLACE TO HEAR OF DIS-
ABLED LAND ROVERS OR TRUCKS BEING ABANDONED RATHER THAN
REPAIRED. UNEVEN AND BADLY-ORGANIZED DISTRIBUTION OF
FOOD, CLOTHING AND AMMUNITION HAS LED TO REDUCTION IN
FIGHTING CAPABILITY OF GIRM FIELD UNITS AS WELL AS CREAT-
ED MORALE PROBLEMS. WE THEREFORE VIEW HUSSEIN'S RETURN
TO MAURITANIA AS INSPECTOR GENERAL (TOGETHER WITH RECENT
APPOINTMENT HIGHLY-CAPABLE, EX-PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER AND
FORMER CHIEF OF STAFF AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE REPLACING
CIVILIAN PHYSICIAN) AS CHANGE INTENDED BY GIRM CIVILIAN
LEADERS TO INSTILL ORDER AND COMPETENCE INTO MILITARY
SUPPLY AND LOGISTICAL COMPONENTS.

HANDYSIDE

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Message Attributes

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